

Supervisor Romaine and County Executive Bellone Join Forces to Offer Expanded and Improved Town Services for Veterans

posted on 4/30/2013 4:19:07 PM

April 29, 2013

Joint Service Agreement will benefit veterans, save taxpayer dollars



Pictured left to right are William Rodriguez, Suffolk County Veterans Service Officer; Tom Ronayne, Director of Suffolk County Veteran Services; Supervisor Ed Romaine; Timothy Strobel, Program Coordinator PFC J. Dwyer Veterans PTSD Peer to Peer Program and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone.

Farmingville, NY - On April 29, Brookhaven Town Supervisor Ed Romaine and Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone held a press conference at Town Hall to announce a Joint Service Agreement to facilitate access to counseling and assistance services for eligible veterans, their spouses, dependents and survivors. The agreement, which assigns one accredited Veterans Service Officer ("VSO") from the County's Veterans Service Agency to provide services at Town Hall or other designated Town facilities, will vastly improve services and save taxpayer dollars. The assigned VSO will be determined by the County and have credentials that lawfully permit them to take Power of Attorney (POA) and represent veterans. Currently, the Town of Brookhaven does not provide such services.

Supervisor Romaine said, "I thank the County Executive and Tom Ronayne for their help in moving this agreement along. Our intention is for the Town to provide the best service to veterans and their families. They deserve nothing less for the sacrifices they have made to protect our freedom. The benefit of this agreement is that services will be improved and expanded, while at the same time saving taxpayer dollars."

"This partnership will help provide improved services to veterans and save taxpayer dollars," Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone said. "I commend Supervisor Romaine for working alongside me to take this important first step towards shared services."

Councilwoman Kathleen Walsh, Town Board liaison to the Division of Veterans Services said, "I am happy to support anything we can do to improve the quality of life for the brave men and women who have proudly served this country. Our veterans have earned the right to expect that their government, no matter what level, will provide the essential services they need and we should always be there for them."

Tom Ronayne, Director of Suffolk County Veteran Services said, "As Accredited Veterans Service Officers, Suffolk

County VSO's also possess the ability to communicate directly with the US Department of Veterans Affairs to track and refine veteran's applications. Suffolk County, as the largest and busiest Veterans Service Agency in NYS also brings a wealth of experience and regionally specific knowledge which greatly enhances the level of service and provides a superior level of service to our veterans."

Joining the Supervisor, the County Executive, Councilwoman Walsh and Mr. Ronayne at the press conference were William Rodriguez, Suffolk County Veterans Service Officer; representatives from the American Legion, VFW, US Veterans Motor Cycle Club, Suffolk County United Veterans, United Veterans Beacon House and team members from the Joseph P. Dwyer Veterans PTSD Peer to Peer program.

The veteran's services provided by the agreement will include:

- Assistance to determine qualification for any Veterans' Affairs ("VA") benefits
- Identification and assistance with the preparation and submission of benefits applications for interested veterans in the community, including Pension, Compensation, Aid and Attendance (A&A) or other benefits
- Assistance to veterans who have questions regarding benefits, applications, various VA forms, eligibility and payment issues
- Answering questions and/or providing relevant information to residents and families regarding VA related topics
- Assistance to veterans in the community in responding to VA related inquires
- Tracking applications and reporting updates to facilities and residents/family members as necessary

For more information, please call 451-TOWN (8696) or visit www.brookhaven.org.

Division of Public Information * Office of the Supervisor

One Independence Hill • Farmingville • NY 11738 • Phone (631) 451-6595 • Fax (631) 451-6258